



UNION GOSPEL MISSION

LIFECHANGE LETTER

Feeding the hungry, restoring the addict and loving our neighbors

APRIL 2021

Alicia's Story:

I can smile again!

"You'll lose weight, you'll have more energy, you'll focus better on work, you'll do everything better."

Those are the lies that Alicia was told by her new boyfriend. The reality was that while using meth, Alicia's life was falling apart. When she became more reliant on drugs, her boyfriend became more abusive and exploited her addiction.

After a violent attack, Alicia found herself fearing for her life. Recovering from her wounds in a hospital, she was finally able to get the help she needed for her addictions and abuse.

Coming into UGM's LifeChange for Women and Their Children during the COVID-19 pandemic, Alicia had the opportunity to focus on healing and connecting with God.

"When I first came to LifeChange I was scared of everyone and everything," she says. "But now I sleep sound, I wake up refreshed looking forward to the day. I can smile again!"

Continued inside...



INSIDE

***Volunteer
Profile: Rob***

***Update:
Shae 2 Years
After LifeChange***

***Become a
Life Giver***

Alicia's Story: *I can smile again!*

Continued from cover...

Coming to UGM literally saved my life.

Shortly after Alicia came to LifeChange for Women and Their Children, she was able to have her 17-year-old daughter Isabella join her.

"I've been able to work on my own trust issues," Isabella says. *"Seeing the change in my mom's life and being able to bond with her has helped me to be able to grow up."*

Alicia has a passion for learning and for helping others. She is looking forward to being able to minister to other people in all walks of life.

Isabella is working on a plan to go to college and become a forensic pathologist.

"UGM literally saved my life."

"I'm looking forward to learning how to become self-sufficient," Alicia says. *"We are thankful for the opportunity that UGM has given us. We appreciate the care and compassion that the donors have shown. It's a blessing to have a safe, healthy environment to heal, but mostly thank you for showing us love."*

UGM's LifeChange is a Christ-centered recovery program where residents live and work in a community of people committed to transforming their lives and breaking the grip of

Isabella and Alicia



addiction. LifeChange consists of counseling, work therapy, discipleship, and transitional after care at no cost to the resident.

If you know of a woman battling addiction, homelessness, or domestic abuse and she is interested in a life change, contact LifeChange for Women and Their Children at 503-802-2271.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: *Rob*

Every Thursday at 11:00 a.m. Rob leads a Bible study for the women of LifeChange. In their Bible study they read through the books of the Bible as well as have open discussions about how to apply the gospel to their own lives.

Rob and his wife Carolyn had a home church for many years. Carolyn, a case manager for UGM, discussed the need for Bible studies at the women's center. It seemed like a natural fit.

"What I love most about these Bible studies is seeing the light go on, when the Holy Spirit moves in these ladies' lives," explains Rob.

"If I could give one piece of advice to people considering volunteering for UGM 2 years after, keep your eyes on Christ. As we are serving the women, we are serving Christ, do your work as unto the Lord."

Are you looking for ways to share the gifts God gave you? If so, please call 503-274-4483 or visit us online at ugmportland.org/volunteer to get involved.



SHAE, 2 YEARS AFTER LIFECHANGE: *Life is Amazing!*

After a life of addiction, homelessness and brokenness, Shae and her two kids came to Union Gospel Mission's LifeChange for Women and Their Children. It was a rough adjustment for Shae, but with love, compassion and patience, she and her children soon thrived.

After graduation, Shae was allowed a designated amount of time to continue to stay at the LifeChange center free of charge so she could get established in a job and build a savings account. Shae's mentor and the staff coached her on picking a career path, budgeting and other skills needed to get on her feet.

Now, two years after her graduation from the program, Shae is a working union apprentice. She has an apartment and owns her own car. Her children are thriving in school and they are all involved in their church.

"Life is amazing!" smiles Shae. *"I love my job, I love the stability I can provide for my family, I love moving forward in life."*

"Before, I was in survival mode, just living day to day," says Shae. *"Now I have a 5-year plan to own my own house with a yard...and maybe a dog."*

I want to say thank you to the staff, volunteers, and donors, without you we couldn't have done this.



UGM BY THE NUMBERS: OCTOBER 2020-FEBRUARY 2021



TOTAL MEALS
82,620



SEARCH+RESCUE KITS
9,298



EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES
1,133



CHAPEL ATTENDANCE/DINNERS
4,510



SACK LUNCHES
2,900



HOT BREAKFAST AND LUNCH
28,655

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

APRIL 2021

BILLBOARD

A Message from Union Gospel Mission
Director Bill Russell



Women Helping Women Find Their Power

UGM recently had the opportunity to meet with CREW, the Commercial Real Estate Women's group, and share about LifeChange for Women and Their Children. Shae, whose update you can read in this LifeChange Letter, shared her testimony. She called in from her construction work site in Northeast Portland. Shae is amazing! I truly believe that women who have found their power deeply want to help other women who are trying to find their power.

This is so different from the sad truth found in women that have experienced abuse and isolation. In those situations, women tend to compete for scarce resources and can turn on each other, rather than turning to each other. I think of the passage, "*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.*" (Galatians 5:1)

When Jesus sets a woman free from abuse, she has the freedom to help her sisters out. One of the greatest takeaways from LifeChange is the formation of lifelong, positive, influential friends who are with them through thick and thin!

Thank you for being a friend to UGM through thick and thin. You have been with us through COVID19 and I trust you will be with us as we move into the next challenging chapter of history!

Bill Russell
Executive Director

Heart of
Hope 
Partner



Become a Life Giver

Heart of Hope monthly donors provide sustainable, life giving hope to people suffering from poverty, homelessness and addiction. By choosing to give monthly, you're reducing administration costs by up to 75% while making an even greater impact in feeding the hungry, restoring the addict and loving our neighbor.

Heart of Hope sustainers give anywhere from \$15 to over \$100 a month to provide meals, shelter, counseling, job training, and so much more allowing lives to be transformed!

**Monthly giving can be set up by
calling 503-274-4483 or go online to
<https://ugmportland.org/heart-of-hope>**

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